

CSEA Local 2001



SEIU
Stronger Together

Labor and Public Employees Committee

March 7, 2006

HB No. 5645

An Act Concerning Collective Bargaining Rights For In-Home State Subsidized Day Care Providers

Good afternoon members of the Committee. My name is Stacey Malitz and I work for the Service Employees International Union CSEA Local 2001.

I am here today to testify in support of HB 5645, ***AN ACT CONCERNING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING RIGHTS FOR IN-HOME STATE SUBSIDIZED DAY CARE PROVIDERS.***

Michael J. O'Brien
President

Patrice Peterson
Secretary/Treasurer

Robert D. Rinker
Executive Director

SEIU has worked with in-home day care providers across the country to raise standards in child care and improve choices for working parents. In Washington State and in Illinois, day care providers have joined together and are now working together with the state to reduce turnover and stem the loss of experienced providers by negotiating fairer wages, affordable health care, and more opportunities for training, and quality incentives.

We have talked to hundreds of state subsidized providers around the state, both licensed and license exempt and we have found tremendous support for providers joining together to form a union. It's their job to make sure kids are well cared for so that parents can go to work and support their families. And they're concerned that it's too hard for parents to find the affordable, quality child care they need.

From 1999 to 2004 the number of family day care spaces dropped 52%.

Over the past four years, Care4Kids funding has been cut nearly in half.

For working families to get the care they need, home-based child care providers need a voice.

Many other home-based providers like Queen Freeloze work long hours every day to care for children in their community, and couldn't be here today, but they share the concerns she spoke about.

Marcia Federico, in New Haven, said she sees that Care4Kids right now works very poorly for parents, kids, and providers. She wants to work together with other providers to address low reimbursement rates that don't cover the real cost



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of providing child care.

Gloria Donaldson, of Hamden, says that Care 4 Kids does not function in a way that allows Providers to give the highest quality of care. She wants to form a union to win affordable health insurance for herself and her family.

Betty Taylor of Norwalk, also needs affordable health insurance. She's also worried about the long delays in eligibility approvals that lead parents to either struggle to pay for periods much longer than they can afford, or to children being denied the necessary care that the system was set up for.

The need for improved educational opportunities for kids, improved access to quality child care for parents, and more stable and sustainable conditions for providers can be best addressed by allowing home day care providers the same freedom that many other workers in our state already have – the freedom to join together in a union to raise standards for themselves and their communities.

I urge you follow the lead of other states who have given home-based providers a voice to improve child care, and pass this bill.

